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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan

Addendum

Information provided by Uzbekistan in follow-up to the concluding observations*

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Note: The present document is being circulated in English, French, Russian and Spanish only.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Information from the National Centre for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan on follow-up to the implementation of paragraphs 10 and 18 of the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the fifth report of Uzbekistan

1. **Paras. 10 (a) and (b)**. In fulfilment of its international obligations in the area of women's rights, Uzbekistan has been carrying out sustained activities on a stage-by-stage basis to incorporate the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into its national legislation and the practices of the relevant State bodies. In particular, in the period 2014–2016, with the assistance of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), a far-reaching and comprehensive study was carried out in Central Asia of Uzbek legislation, with a view to developing specific proposals for the implementation of effective temporary special measures aimed at enhancing the status of women, promoting equal conditions and opportunities for the realization of the rights of women and men in all spheres of society. The proposals were discussed with the involvement of representatives of public authorities and women's non-governmental organizations in Tashkent and in all regions of Uzbekistan and then forwarded to the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan for its consideration. At the current time, a national action plan has been developed for the upgrading of legislation, designed to ensure the implementation of temporary special measures in Uzbekistan by boosting the status of women through their participation in legislative elections, their appointment to senior posts in executive bodies and their empowerment in the workplace and in labour relations.

Over the period 2016–2017, work continued on upgrading the bill on guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men. In that process, the National Centre for Human Rights carried out supplementary expert appraisals of the bill in more than 40 State bodies and non-governmental organizations and, in 2017, the bill was forwarded to the Ministry of Justice and the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan for their consideration. In addition, proposed amendments to the Family Code to raise the marriageable age of girls from 17 to 18, submitted by the Women's Committee, are under consideration by the Legislative Chamber.

Work is continuing by Parliament to protect the rights of women: article 125-1 has been introduced into the Criminal Code and article 47-3 into the Code of Administrative Liability, regarding liability for violation of the law on marriageable age.

Under an Act of 10 August 2015, the penalties prescribed by the Criminal Code in article 121, part 2, on the coercion of a woman into sexual intercourse, have been stiffened with a custodial sentence of between three and five years. Articles 130-1, on the manufacture, import, dissemination, advertising or display of products that promote a cult of violence or cruelty, 133, on the removal of human organs or tissue, and 138, on the forcible and unlawful deprivation of liberty, have been added to the Criminal Code. In 2017, the Commission on Women and Youth was set up in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis.

Further improvements to the legislation on women's rights were discussed on 9 September 2015 at an international conference on the role of women in the development of civil society and the building of the State and society, with reference to the experience of Uzbekistan, held in the city of Samarkand; on 27 February 2016

and 18 May 2016, at special meetings of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan on implementing the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; on 29 February 2016, at a conference on the legal regulations against direct and indirect discrimination against women; on 11 May 2016, at a conference on the conceptual framework for the protection of the family, motherhood and childhood; on 18 November 2016, at a conference on the role of female entrepreneurship in the economy of Uzbekistan and its development prospects; on 22 November 2016, at a forum of women's civil society organizations, and at other gatherings.

A book on the approach to the national monitoring of women's rights in Uzbekistan was published in Tashkent in 2015, in Uzbek and Russian, setting out proposals for improving the monitoring of the law on women's rights.

2. **Paras. 18 (a) and (e)**. In Uzbekistan, sustained attention is given to preventing encroachments of any kind on the personal security and the life and health of citizens. A wide-ranging discussion has been launched and is now under way on the bill on the prevention of domestic violence, with the aim of protecting children and women.

In particular, the bill includes a legal definition of the concepts of "violence in the family" (economic, physical, psychological and sexual violence) and "victim of violence", and sets in place measures for general and individual prevention that make it possible to prevent the more serious consequences of domestic violence. Measures for the prevention of individual cases of violence include an official warning issued to the perpetrator of an administrative offence in family or domestic relations stipulating the inadmissibility of such illegal behaviour, the placement of the perpetrator on a list of designated domestic trouble-makers and the possibility of the issuance of a restraining order (imposing restrictions on specific activities of the perpetrator of domestic violence).

The bill defines the powers of State authorities to prevent domestic violence and the forms and methods attending their interaction with public organizations in that sphere and addresses issues involving the training and retraining of specialists in the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims, including temporary refuge. The preparation and implementation of those measures are deemed to be the responsibility of local State authorities in their interaction with internal affairs offices, health-care and education institutions, agencies for the social protection of the population and other such organizations.

On 6 July 2017, the Interdepartmental Commission on Countering Crime and Preventing Lawlessness adopted a set of measures to prevent domestic violence for the period 2017–2018, outlining measures to study the causes and conditions conducive to domestic violence, and to prevent and eradicate this scourge. All complaints lodged by citizens in connection with any form of domestic violence are registered and investigated in the prescribed manner by the internal affairs agencies. In cases in which, as a result of domestic violence, a person has suffered minor bodily harm without prejudice to health, a case file is opened for the purpose of instituting administrative proceedings against the offenders under article 52 of the Code of Administrative Liability and is referred to the court in accordance with the procedure prescribed by law.

In order to identify and eliminate the causes and conditions conducive to the commission of violent crimes, guidelines have been drafted on the investigation of alleged threats to the life and health of individuals and of offences committed by persons on the watch-list of the internal affairs agencies. Heads of units of the internal

affairs agencies report regularly to the public on the work under way in this area. The services of the media are enlisted in the hunt for perpetrators of serious crimes of violence and women are given specific guidance on how to conduct themselves in extreme situations in order to prevent violent acts against them.

Women's rights issues, including measures to combat violence against women and children, are included in a number of courses studied at the Department of International Law and Human Rights and other departments of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and in the curricula of the Centre for the Further Training of Legal Specialists of the Ministry of Justice, for judges working on criminal and civil cases and for lawyers.

As part of the in-service training of officers of the prevention service and of the internal affairs authorities, courses are run on international instruments to suppress various forms of discrimination against women and to prevent violence against women. The departmental newspaper of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, *Postda* ("Line of duty"), periodically publishes the telephone numbers of the Ministry, of its departments and of its units in the field, which citizens can call to report domestic violence issues and other matters relating to protection of the rights of victims of violence. To keep the general public informed about the results of work on the above-mentioned issues, active use is made of the media — television, radio and print — through such programmes as the regular reports of the Press Centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the "02 Live" broadcasts, and the Ministry's departmental publications — the *Postda* newspaper and the magazines *Shchit*, or *Kalkan* in Uzbek ("Shield") and others.

In 2017, officials of the prevention service of the internal affairs authorities conducted 37,958 meetings, discussions and lectures on legal subjects and the prevention of crime among minors and young people and on the protection of their rights and lawful interests and on human rights, as compared to 33,219 such measures in 2016. These included 9,859 meetings with the public in the mahallas in their areas of residence, compared to 7,733 such meetings in 2016; 279 meetings with students at higher educational establishments, compared to 249 in 2016; 8,467 meetings with students of academic high schools and vocational colleges, compared to 6,800 such meetings in 2016; and 19,353 meetings with schoolchildren, compared to 18,437 such meetings in 2016.

The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, together with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, has adopted a programme of activities to promote accountability for contraventions of the marriageable age and to encourage compulsory secondary specialized and vocational education, in particular among girls. A media plan is being put into effect to promote coverage in the print media, on television and on the radio of topics relating to the forming and maintenance of family relations, and the prevention of divorce, domestic violence and other negative developments.

In the first half of 2017, the Women's Committee and the Mahalla Foundation prevented some 12,000 family break-ups and 10,000 citizens had their problems with alimony payments resolved. Psychosocial support was provided to 978 families in discord, to 846 women whose husbands had travelled abroad, and to 995 families who found themselves in a crisis situation because of various diseases.

As part of the 2017 State programme on a year-long dialogue with the people about human interests, integrated teams have been set up in local areas (in each region, district, town and mahalla), to study the social and economic conditions and the cultural and moral situation of families. In this way, 60 per cent of the problems

arising within families were resolved at the level of the mahalla, 40 per cent were followed up by district and regional xokimiyats, and taken up under local development programmes. As things stand, 193 district and municipal development programmes formulated in line with the needs and wishes of the people have been submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers.

In the regions, there are nine centres for the social and legal support of women and 170 consultative centres for women operating on a voluntary basis, with the status of non-governmental organizations. The centres provide social, psychological and legal support and help women in difficulty to find jobs. Thus, over the course of 2016, 6,685 women who found themselves in crisis situations came in person to the centres or called its helpline. The following services were provided to them free of charge: 1,439 received essential legal advice; 467 were given psychological assistance; 197 received material assistance; 128 were placed in jobs; 258 were given the opportunity to acquire vocational skills; 143 acquired documents to submit to the courts; 72 received legal support in judicial proceedings; and 168 were granted temporary housing.

During 2016, 49,607 women called at the advisory centres for women, with various issues and problems, of whom 4,116 came from families in difficulty; 35,340 women received practical and targeted assistance, including 5,017 who were given legal advice; 5,014 received psychological assistance; 15,817 received medical care; 1,527 were given help in finding jobs; and 1,323 were given the opportunity to acquire vocational skills that helped them to widen their economic opportunities.

Over the course of 2016, working together with the Government and other civil society organizations, the Women's Committee undertook a range of activities. Of these, 91,461 were designed to raise the legal awareness of the population, 70,982 involved work with troubled families, and 44,512 focused on crime prevention, human trafficking and illegal migration.

To improve the systems for disseminating information on women's rights, the State Statistics Committee, together with the Women's Committee, set up an official website at the address: gender.stat.uz, containing data on health, education, work and social protection from a gender perspective.